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Processed Products... At Your Service

Fruit and Vegetable Division

Processed Fruit and Vegetable Services

We offer a broad range of product certification and acceptance services for canned, frozen, and dehydrated fruits, vegetables, and related products. These services can be tailored to meet specific requirements and can include quality assurance design and monitoring as well as expert product grading and certification. Evaluations can be based on official U.S. grade standards or on processor or buyer quality and condition requirements. These user fee services are available upon request to anyone who has a financial interest in these commodities.

For Processors

The service can check overall production quality, augmenting a processor's quality control programs. It can also provide an impartial evaluation of final product quality. Several approved grade and inspection marks can be included on the processor's label. Processors must meet certain contract requirements before this service is implemented and the use of approved grademarks can be authorized.

For Buyers

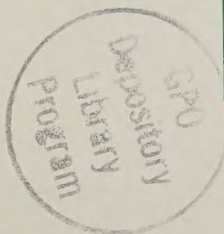
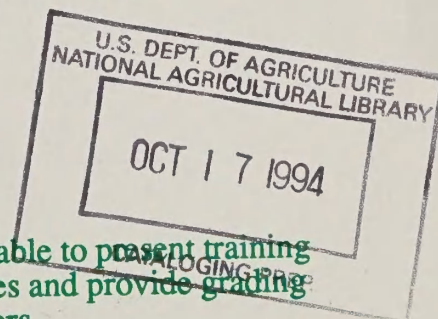
The service can be used to determine if the final products or production operations are meeting the buyer's requirements. This can be done by officially sampling and grading the final product and issuing an inspection certificate recognized as *prima facie* evidence in U.S. courts, or by monitoring and evaluating the supplier's quality assurance and production operations. If a buyer wishes, these services can be tied to a contract requirement that the product label bears official U.S. Department of Agriculture grade and inspection marks.

Other Services

Processed fruit and vegetable products may be inspected or graded under various grading programs tailored to fit most needs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also provides services that include:

- inspection of processing plants for compliance with government or private buyer sanitation requirements;
- checking warehouse lots for condition of food containers and wholesomeness of product;
- case stamping to provide lot identity; and
- checkloading to verify identity and quantity.

U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors also are available to present training slides and other visual aids on grading or related activities and provide grading demonstrations for plant personnel and institutional buyers.



USDA Marks

Several grade and inspection marks have been established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help consumers make informed food selections. Processors and buyers may assist the consumer by using one or more of these official marks. The type of inspection conducted and the grade of a product determine the type of shield, mark, or other approved identification that can be used.

USDA Standards

To provide uniformity in grading, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has over 150 official standards for processed fruits, vegetables, and related products. These standards establish grades for a variety of products based on quality and analytical factors such as taste, color, maturity, sugar and acid content, size, defects, appearance, etc. Because of the variability of different commodities, each standard includes a combination of different factors in determining a particular grade. However, the higher the grade, the higher the quality will be for the particular product.

More Information

To apply for services or obtain additional information, contact: Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, Room 0709-South, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456. Telephone: (202) 720-4693, or one of the Processed Products Branch offices listed below.

EASTERN REGION

Glen Ellyn, Illinois
Telephone: (708) 790-6937

Field Offices

East Point, GA	(404) 763-7495
Hunt Valley, MD	(301) 527-0400
North Brunswick, NJ	(201) 545-0939
Ft. Buchanan, PR	(809) 783-2230
Portland, ME	(207) 772-1588
Richmond, VA	(804) 786-0930
Ripon, WI	(414) 748-2287
South Bend, IN	(219) 287-5407
Weslaco, TX	(512) 968-2126
Winter Haven, FL	(813) 294-7416

WESTERN REGION

Fresno, California
Telephone: (209) 487-5891

Field Offices

Denver, CO	(303) 294-7645
Fresno, CA	(209) 487-5210
Honolulu, HI	(808) 548-7138
Los Angeles, CA	(213) 894-3173
Salem, OR	(503) 399-5761
San Jose, CA	(408) 291-7467
Stockton, CA	(209) 946-6301
Yakima, WA	(509) 575-5869

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